



TEXT SUMMARY

In this week’s text, [Exodus 32](#), we see catastrophic events unfold as Israel commits spiritual adultery on her honeymoon. Impatient at Moses’ long absence on Sinai, the people ask Aaron to make an image for them to worship. Aaron complies, and Israel plunges into a drunken, idolatrous orgy while Moses is speaking with Yahweh at the top of the mountain.

Yahweh is furious, of course, as is Moses. But Moses intercedes on behalf of his rebellious countrymen, and God relents. Still, Moses must deal with the widespread, ongoing debauchery in the camp, and before the day is over 3000 Hebrew men lie dead.

INTRODUCTION (OBSERVATION):

1. Where does Aaron get the gold to fashion the image? How does Moses ensure that the gold that had been used in the image would never be used again? (See v. 20)
2. Scan back over the previous chapters: what was Yahweh communicating to Moses while he was up on the mountain for all that time?
3. When Aaron announces the opening of the festival of worship the next day, how does he describe it (v. 5)?
4. When Moses confronts Aaron, how does Aaron describe his role in the creation of the golden calf image?
5. On what basis does Moses appeal to Yahweh to relent from His fierce anger?

DISCUSSION (INTERPRETATION):

There is an ironic contrast between what Yahweh was saying to Moses on Sinai and what the people clamored for below.

1. What do the people want?
2. How is God providing for that need at that same moment in His instructions to Moses?

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SO WHAT? (APPLICATION):

1. **Paul refers to the rebellion of God’s people in the wilderness in 1 Cor 10:11-12.** What does Paul say is the **point** of those stories of the failure of God’s people?
 - Has there ever been a time in your life when your preening self-confidence blinded you to spiritual temptation and danger?
 - What means did God’s Spirit use to work in your life in that situation (His Word, His people, His Spirit speaking to your heart and conscience)?
 - How did you respond to the call to repentance?

2. **The people’s rebellion was borne out of their impatience at God’s timing.** The sermon quotes Philip Ryken: “The story of the golden calf tells us more than what happened; it tells us what happens. It exposes the anatomy of our own idolatry. By looking carefully at how the Israelites fell into sin, we can see the pattern of sin in our lives, with the goal of learning how to obey God.”
 - How is impatience with God’s timing a kind of **idolatry**?
 - What does **2 Pet 3:8** tell us about the proportions of God’s timetable?
 - Have you ever found yourself chafing at God’s seeming distance and slowness?
 - Have you ever seen God demonstrate His faithfulness and kindness by **declining** to give you what you so desperately thought you needed? Were you able to see His kindness and faithfulness later, after the crisis?

3. **Aaron’s announcement that the people would use the golden calf to worship Yahweh points to a confusion, a conflation of genuine and false worship.** Have you ever seen (or been tempted by) worship that looks like the real thing but is really self-serving?